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GENERAL DISCUSSION OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY, INCLUDING REGIONAL AND SECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS

International economic co-operation for development

Statement submitted by the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), a non-governmental organization in consultative status, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

received 29 June 1984

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INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

The World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) recognizes with great concern the persisting world economic crisis as well as the serious deterioration of international economic relations. The disastrous political and social consequences are likely to result if they cannot be arrested and reversed soon.

WFUNA notes with preoccupation that in recent years no substantial progress has been achieved in international negotiations either within or outside the United Nations on the issues of development and international economic co-operation, and regrets the introduction of an increasing number of trade restrictions including unilateral measures of discriminatory nature.

WFUNA considers the aforementioned dangerous trends as a deviation from basic principles of international trade relations and the fundamentals of international economic relations as laid down inter alia, in the Charter on Economic Rights and Duties of States, and wishes to emphasize that economic co-operation will remain essential for international development and that any new international economic order must be based on what is beneficial to the world economy, not simply to one portion of it. WFUNA therefore recognizes the urgent need to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in promoting development and international economic co-operation and overcoming existing difficulties and problems in this area.

In the context of the above,

WFUNA urges the governments of the Member States of the United Nations to undertake concerted measures to normalize international economic relations and assist developing countries in their development efforts. In the view of WFUNA such measures at the intergovernmental level should be primarily aimed at:

(a) securing appropriate political conditions for development and international economic co-operation through relaxation of tensions and progress to disarmament which would release urgently needed substantial resources for development and should contribute to overcoming the current economic crisis;

(b) making all efforts to achieve real progress in international negotiations on development and international economic co-operation with a view to establishing a New International Economic Order and to this effect to start as early as possible the first round of global negotiations;

(c) restoring confidence in international economic co-operation, in particular, in relations between countries with different levels of development and among countries having different economic systems, particularly by:

(i) observing basic principles, rules and norms of international trade, especially the principles of the most favoured nation and non-discrimination;

(ii) refraining from applying trade restrictions, blockades, embargoes and other economic measures incompatible with the provisions of the United Nations Charter and undertaking to eliminate all such measures presently in force without delay;

(iii) adopting within the Economic and Social Council, to this effect, a set of preventive and promotional measures aimed at the strengthening of confidence among nations, and promoting their economic relations irrespective of adverse impact of political tensions, inter alia, through consultations on future policies which may influence their respective economies;

(d) promoting autonomous development and economic co-operation among developing countries as an integral part of a global development effort and favouring a self-reliant development;

(e) continuing assistance to developing countries by developed market-economy countries, socialist countries and member countries of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries;

(f) further strengthening the role of the United Nations Development Programme in taking over-all responsibility for administering, directing and financing programmes in the field of technical assistance at all levels, especially at the local one, and in overcoming its current budget crisis;

(g) asking developed market economy countries and other World Bank member States in the position to do so, to contribute more generously to the World Bank Group, in particular to the International Development Association;

(h) giving more favourable consideration to the proposal of the developing countries to convene an international conference on monetary and financial affairs with a view to reconsidering the structure and functioning of the international monetary system;

(i) making efforts to reach, in compliance with the International Development Strategy adopted by the United Nations General Assembly for the Third International Development Decade, the target of providing 0.7 per cent of GNP of developed countries to developing countries as Official Development Assistance;

(j) fighting protectionism and securing access for the goods from developing countries to the markets of all developed countries in parallel with stabilizing commodities' exports earnings of developing countries;

(k) making every effort to overcome the causes and consequences of the present world social crisis, in particular, the critical social situation of the developing countries.

WFUNA would like to draw the attention of the Members of the Council to the fact that the above policy statement was unanimously adopted by the United Nations Associations established in all parts of the world, in countries of various political, economic and social systems, and at different stages of development.

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GENERAL DISCUSSION OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY, INCLUDING REGIONAL AND SECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS

Statement submitted by the International Savings Bank Institute, a non-governmental organization in consultative status, category II

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated to the members of the Economic and Social Council in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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Savings and international development co-operation

The International Savings Bank Institute (ISBI) regularly informs the international community on the fundamental role of savings, and practises a progressive policy of decentralization with regard to development co-operation activities by the savings banks.

Having repeatedly stressed the importance of savings in the context of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade and the various General Assembly resolutions on the subject, 1/ ISBI is endeavouring regularly to organize international projects for the increased mobilization of savings in developing countries and their use for the benefit of the rural and urban populations.

Set up in 1924 to promote savings and protect savers, ISBI is now represented world-wide: it has 116 members in 75 countries - 27 in Africa, 19 in the Americas, 10 in Asia, 49 in Europe and 11 in Oceania. Through its diversity, ISBI is increasingly associating local and national institutions with various programmes so as to enable its members to participate in the preparation and implementation of all ISBI activities of direct concern to them.

1/ See E/1983/NGO/4 of 7 July 1983.

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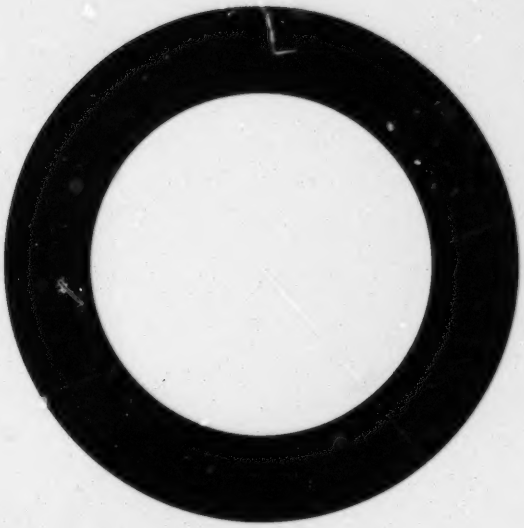
The Institute regularly organizes meetings all over the world - for example, the 23rd General Assembly of ISBI, which was held at Bangkok, and the 14th World Congress of Savings Banks, which took place at Singapore in April 1984. Moreover, as part of its activities for development co-operation by savings banks, the Institute now has a special unit (the Development Co-operation Co-ordination Unit) and a world network of savings institutions constituting an infrastructure of skills and local administrative support services which is essential for the implementation of its various programmes. These programmes are drawn up in consultation with the Institute's regional bodies for Africa (African Advisory Group), for Latin America (Latin American Savings Bank Group) and for Asia and the Pacific (Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific). These bodies have been established to strengthen regional consultation and co-ordination and enable ISBI to organize activities providing an optimum response to the specific requirements of rural and urban populations.

In order to plan its development co-operation activities as part of an integrated programme of international co-operation for the mobilization of savings in the developing countries, under the auspices of the United Nations, ISBI has formulated an International Programme of Co-operation for Savings and Development, the first phase of which is to take place between 1985 and 1987. The main objective of this programme is to enhance the professional skills of all supervisory and other staff of savings institutions with a view to providing new and improved savings and credit services to the rural and urban populations in developing countries.

In order to obtain this objective, ISBI is organizing in-service training schemes, courses, bilateral subregional and regional seminars, and a special programme for the study and systematic dissemination of the results of each project.

In addition to these activities, the Institute deals with such areas as organization, automation, international transactions, marketing, advertising, staff training, information, and technical and financial assistance.



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REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT DECADE

COLLECTION

Statement submitted by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, a non-governmental organization in consultative status, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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1. On the occasion of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) would like to reiterate its support for the broad social objectives, and the approach of targets, as agreed by the General Assembly on 5 December 1980, when it formally adopted the Strategy (resolution 35/56, annex). In particular, the Confederation has stressed from the outset the importance of adequate flows of resources from industrialized to developing countries as a prerequisite for balanced growth, including the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) in official development assistance (ODA). An average annual growth of GDP of 7 per cent in the developing countries is also still the minimum required for a reasonable degree of social progress during the Decade.

2. The first three years of the Third United Nations Development Decade have been marked by the continuing economic recession, despite some faltering signs of recovery, and by only minimal progress towards the achievement of the targets set by the Strategy. Progress towards the fulfilment of the 0.7 per cent ODA target has been slow and, in general, there have been severe cut-backs in multilateral assistance, while commercial sources of credit have dwindled, as one developing country after another has had to face the consequences of accumulated debt burdens and the loss of credit-worthiness with commercial banks. A large number of developing countries, particularly in Africa, have experienced declining or even negative growth.

3. There has been a widespread tendency to explain the lack of progress in the achievement of the social objectives of the Strategy by the unfavourable international economic climate. The objectives of the Strategy, it has been stated, were predicated on the assumption of a pick-up in economic growth, and were bound

to be hindered by the failure of that growth to materialize. However, the targets of the Strategy constituted a set of politically agreed objectives aimed at stimulating growth and bringing about economic and social development. Their achievement was hindered because of the inappropriate deflationary policies of the main industrialized countries, which only served further to stifle aggregate demand, leading to a downward spiral of decline in trade, increased protectionism, the collapse of commodity prices and a further deepening of the recession.

4. Caught in the grip of an economic crisis, partly of their own making, the industrialized countries have demonstrated less and less political will towards international economic co-operation. As a result, all of the major initiatives of the North-South dialogue, dealt with in the Strategy, have been compromised:

(a) The global negotiations, which were to have provided a framework for the implementation of the Strategy in specific areas;

(b) The international commodity agreements and the Common Fund for Commodities (paras. 33, 35, 55 of the Strategy);

(c) Special initiatives on energy;

(d) The United Nations Industrial Development Fund (paras. 75 and 76);

(e) The United Nations Code of Conduct on Transnational Corporations (para. 70);

(f) Official development assistance targets and aid flows (para. 103);

(g) Targets for annual growth of gross domestic product (GDP) and trade expansion;

(h) Increased opportunities for productive employment;

(i) Easing of the conditionality of the International Monetary Fund (paras. 24 and 26);

(j) International Development Association soft loans (World Bank).

5. The ILO sectoral report on the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy dealt with five areas of particular concern in which social progress has been far from satisfactory, namely, (a) employment and poverty alleviation, (b) vocational training, (c) safety and health in the working environment, (d) child labour and (e) population participation. Those are indeed of prime importance. The satisfaction of basic needs, particularly food security and satisfying nutritional requirements, (paras. 28 and 86) should also be mentioned.

6. The Confederation's statement on "Full employment and an end to poverty", adopted at its thirteenth World Congress, held at Oslo in June 1983, drew attention to the alarming increases in levels of poverty and unemployment world-wide. The failure to satisfy food needs is a specific and disturbing manifestation of that poverty in many developing countries, particularly in Africa. The Confederation wishes to emphasize the fact that progress cannot be made towards achieving the objectives of the Strategy if the mood prevalent in the international community continues to be inward-looking and to be characterized by an unwillingness to break the deadlock on the various aspects of dialogue aimed at bringing about

enduring solutions. Nor can progress be made in a climate of protectionism, deflationary policies, and depressed demand, leading to unfavourable terms of trade and worsening balance of payments in developing countries, reductions in aid and painful adjustment policies, all of which place serious constraints on the possibilities for growth and the achievement of the economic and social objectives espoused by the Strategy.

7. The ICFTU 1984 World Economic Review has focused on the reality of an interdependent world, where the deepening recession and a depression of demand in the developed countries have had a dramatic impact on the economic performance of developing countries, and have further exacerbated a situation of declining living standards, increased unemployment and the failure to satisfy basic needs. Stagnation in agricultural production and in food production have reached crisis proportions in many countries of Africa, where millions of people are faced with the threat of famine.

8. A trade union conference on the effects of the global economic crisis on African countries, held at Dakar in March 1984, focused on the critical economic problems facing Africa, including the problems of food shortages. The conclusions of that conference, the Dakar Declaration, set out an agenda for concerted action at national, continental and international levels, aimed at restoring balanced growth to African economies.

9. Both the Dakar Declaration and the ICFTU 1984 World Economic Review emphasize the need for increased economic co-operation. While the forces of interdependence have accelerated deflationary trends over the last three years, they could also assist Governments in bringing about a sustainable world recovery, based on co-ordinated, growth-oriented policies, thereby establishing the pre-conditions for the attainment of the economic and social objectives set by the Strategy.

10. The Confederation continues to support the Strategy's objective of the full and effective participation of the entire population in all stages of the development process and views the fulfilment of that objective as critical for the successful implementation of the Strategy. Development programmes cannot succeed without the effective participation of the people, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of that development, through their own freely chosen organizations. The Confederation has always stressed that the observance of international standards is an indispensable component of social progress and development.

11. The negotiation of the Strategy was a major step forward in international economic relations. It placed priority on the urgent basic needs of the majority of the world's population and urged Governments to adapt their policies and institutions to enable the achievement of modest and realistic targets. The Confederation still supports this approach, even though many Governments have effectively abdicated responsibility for trying to control the economic forces which have produced the set-backs of the last four years. Indeed, the kind of international co-operation envisaged in the Strategy is needed now more urgently than ever.